

are able, to know of these things, and the reality of them.

But let it not be said in this place that they have no comforter, that they have no defender; because in the days ahead, as we pause and reflect this weekend, each of us going to our own place of worship, I suspect many millions of Americans in churches and synagogues and mosques and in their own private devotions will pray.

We will, each of us, pray, not just for the safety of our troops, but we will pray for these who shed the tears of the oppressed. We will pray that God will have his mercy on all the innocent in the way of war, confident that our military will use extraordinary efforts to avoid casualties by noncombatants.

It is my hope that somewhere in the heart of hearts of the children in these pictures that I have shown today, and in the families they represent, there will be the knowledge that there is a defender; there is a nation, some 50 nations, that stand ready to end their oppression, to dry their tears, and to lead Iraq into a new dawn of civilization, a new dawn of freedom from oppression and torture and the abuse of women and the stifling of basic civil and human rights.

That is my prayer, that is my hope, and of that I remain confident, that the United States of America will, if need be by force, or by showing enough force that it is voluntary, lead Iraq into that bright future.

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

A message in writing from the President of the United States was communicated to the House by Ms. Wanda Evans, one of his secretaries.

AMERICA'S ROLE IN FINDING A SOLUTION TO TERRORISM

THE SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. BISHOP of Utah). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 7, 2003, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON-LEE) is recognized for 60 minutes.

Ms. JACKSON-LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, I take this time to try to craft and articulate the burden that so many of us feel as we hope to be part of a solution that respects life over death, and clearly captures the role and the position of the United States of America as the singular world power, the problem solver, the great humanitarian.

Mr. Speaker, I believe that the American people every day epitomize a caring Nation, a population that is charitable and eager to be of help. I know that, Mr. Speaker, because none of us are the same since 9-11. We cried, we hoped, we prayed, and all we wanted to do was to embrace our brothers and sisters who had lost their loved ones; and even to find some sense of hope that more would be found alive. We watched steadfastly every day, every hour, every minute, every second as the

brave first responders were looking to find life.

So I know that Americans truly are those who care about people; and yes, where there is no justice, Americans desire to march in to create justice.

Mr. Speaker, we could find almost zero divide when Americans rose to the floor of the House in the United States Congress after 9-11 and authorized the President's authority to fight the war against terrorism. Not only did Members of the United States Congress offer themselves as soldiers in the political process of fighting the war on terrorism, but all of America joined.

As we looked around as far as the eye could see, and as far as we could hear, and as far as we could imagine, nations all over the world, Mr. Speaker, joined us in our horror, in our hurt and pain, but in our resolve. As I traveled on behalf of this Congress, whether it was in the Caribbean, in Africa, in Asia; whether it was in the Pacific or in South America, Australia and other places, they all, to a one, said, we are with you. We feel the pain of this Nation, and we wish to fight with you.

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Mr. Speaker, there is nothing like a coalition of strength and resolve that will make democracy and freedom a breathing, living entity, not just words.

Mr. Speaker, I was eager to join my colleagues shortly after 9-11 and shortly after we began the war on terrorism as we went to Afghanistan. One of my major concerns, Mr. Speaker, was to make sure I greeted and met with the men and women of the United States military, as I have done, Mr. Speaker, in going to Bosnia during the middle of that war before the Dayton Peace Treaty was signed; meeting with the respective presidents at that time, Milosovic who obviously told an untruth and got his just too by being tried before the war crimes tribunal. And then as I went to Kosovo to meet with General Wesley Clark near the muddy near Albania as we were in a collaborative effort with NATO raising our voices against ethnic cleansing, murderous acts, stopping that with our allies; and then going into Afghanistan to see the troops and to go into that nation to begin to hopefully encourage it to be a nation, and as well to see the pain that was there.

I do not have the pictures of the faces of children, but when you go to an orphanage with a thousand children's scars and sores all over their faces, you have a resolve to say America is here now; we are going to help you.

I mentioned Afghanistan last before I discussed this dilemma with Iraq because I have just heard the pleas of women from Afghanistan saying that even with the commitment of this Nation, there is fear in Afghanistan now because they wonder about America's resolve to help them. I am thinking, of course, of the battle fiercely going on there with our troops bravely fighting

against the Taliban that are in the respective mountains and caves that maybe which cleared the city.

But Afghans will tell you the Taliban are still there, that the terrorists still abound. What does this say to America and our foreign policy and to this Congress? Unlike 20 years ago, we cannot abandon Afghanistan and so Afghanistan becomes a front that deals with the needs for American military to be present, and in essence the needs for us to continue our war against terrorism.

But how do we do that, Mr. Speaker? We are now yielding to what I consider an untimely move toward war in Iraq, when in actuality our job is not finished in Afghanistan. And in fact we have options to be able to address the question in Iraq. There is no doubt that a despot rules that country. I hesitate to say, Mr. Speaker, tragically we could probably list 30 to 31 nations with that kind of despotic leader; and so the United States has to be methodical, we have to work with coalitions, we have to be able to reflect upon history.

We have to look at the Berlin Wall and as Americans saw that wall crumbling brick by brick. How did it go so? Because the United Nations, the allies and America had a resolve to have a strong defense and to be able to allow the German people to see a better way; and it crumbled from within, not without, of course, a strong military from the allies making it known to Germany that we would not tolerate the continued existence. The resolve brought the wall down. And out of that, we saved thousands of lives without going to war.

Russia, the Soviet Union, is not the Soviet Union of yesteryear. And the independent European countries that used to be part of the Soviet Union are clamoring to be part of NATO. How did we do that with our resolve and our persistence in a coalition?

There is nothing worse than this Nation going forward unilaterally and preemptively against Iraq. What we will be intending to do may not be the result because all of those wonderful people that we want to save, those 6-year-old babies, 2-month-old babies, those elderly women, elderly men, those young families who are seeking nothing but a better life will be the collateral damage, how cold a word, of our unilateral attack on Iraq and Baghdad. Lives will be lost, and certainly large numbers of the brave young men and women in the United States military who without one bit of criticism are there in the Mid East now will be lost.

War should be the last option, Mr. Speaker. I have not said war should never be an option because I do not believe in this Nation being a wimp. And I believe that if this Nation needed defending, every American would step over each other in order to be on the frontline. But you cannot characterize one patriotism on the basis of raising the doubts of a war at this juncture